

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSC-05 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03

ACDA-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06

TRSE-00 SAJ-01 DODE-00 OMB-01 H-01 EB-08 /075 W

-----141532Z 033850 /41

R 141252Z FEB 77

FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2958

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, PINS, PORS, PROP, UR

SUBJ: ZNANIE SOCIETY LECTURE ON SOVIET CIVIL DEFENSE

REF: 76 LENINGRAD 0443

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: A ZNANIE LECTURER ATTEMPTED TO TURN THE TABLES ON RECENT SPECULATION IN THE UNITED STATES ON THE NATURE OF THE SOVIET CIVIL DEFENSE PROGRAM, BY PRESENTING SOVIET PROGRAM AS STRICTLY DEFENSIVE, FOCUSED MAINLY ON SAVING LIVES, AND EVEN LAGGING BEHIND THE AMERICAN CIVIL DEFENSE PROGRAM IN CERTAIN RESPECTS. CONTRARY INTERPRETATIONS OF SOVIET PROGRAM WERE DISMISSED AS EFFORTS BY MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX IN U.S. TO MAINTAIN GROWING DEFENSE EXPENDITURES. END SUMMARY.

2. A FEBRUARY 10 ZNANIE LECTURE ENTITLED "CIVIL DEFENSE OF THE SOVIET UNION--ONE OF THE FACTORS OF THE STRENGTHENING OF THE COUNTRY'S DEFENSE CAPABILITY" PROVED SHORT BOTH ON FACTS AND AUDIENCE, BUT PROVIDED INTERESTING SIDELIGHTS ON THE CIVIL DEFENSE PROGRAM'S PRESENTATION TO THE PUBLIC. THE SPEAKER STRESSED THAT:

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--ALTHOUGH PEACE HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED, A POSSIBILITY OF WAR REMAINS, AND THE USSR IS FORCED TO INCREASE ITS CIVIL DEFENSE CAPACITY AND ARMED FORCES;

--A CAMPAIGN IS UNDERWAY NOW IN THE UNITED STATES ON THE PART OF PERSONS REPRESENTING THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, WHO, IN CONTRADICTION OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND SECRETARY VANCE'S

DECLARATIONS ON PEACE AND DISARMAMENT, INVOKE A "SOVIET THREAT" TO MAINTAIN HIGH DEFENSE EXPENDITURES AND RETURN TO COLD WAR POLICIES;

--THE SOVIET CIVIL DEFENSE PROGRAM IS SIMPLY THE NUCLEAR AGE SUCCESSOR TO AN OLDER LOCAL AIR DEFENSE PROGRAM GOING BACK TO 1932 AND IS DESIGNED TO HELP SOVIET PEOPLE SURVIVE NUCLEAR WAR WITH THE WEST; AND

--THE MAIN TASK IS TO SAVE LIVES; TWO OTHER TASKS ARE: TO PROTECT OBJECTS OF NATIONAL ECONOMY AND TO LIQUIDATE THE AFTEREFFECTS OF NUCLEAR WAR.

3. SPEAKER LARGELY NEGLECTED QUESTIONS OF NATURE OF SOVIET SHELTERS, PLANS FOR PROTECTING INDUSTRY, AND ORGANIZATION OF CIVIL DEFENSE FORCES TO DISCUSS SUCH ITEMS AS GAS MASKS AND PROTECTIVE CLOTHING, ALTHOUGH HE MENTIONED SHELTERS CAPABLE OF WITHSTANDING BOTH NUCLEAR AND CHEMICAL ATTACK, AND, IN HIS DISCUSSION OF RESPIRATORS, ALSO RAISED POSSIBILITY OF BIOLOGICAL ATTACK. HE MENTIONED SOVIET PROGRAM OF SHELTERS FOR 160 MILLION STOCKED WITH FOOD AND WATER FOR SIX DAYS, BUT IT WAS UNCLEAR IN CONTEXT WHETHER THIS IS AN ACHIEVEMENT OR AN AIM. THE REMAINDER OF THE POPULATION (PRIMARILY THE YOUNG, THE OLD, AND HOUSEWIVES) WOULD BE EVACUATED FROM TARGET AREAS. HE ALSO MENTIONED THE SUBWAY SYSTEM AS A USEFUL PLACE OF REFUGE.

4. THE SPEAKER IMPLIED THAT IT IS PERHAPS THE AMERICAN SIDE WHICH IS USING CIVIL DEFENSE OFFENSIVELY. HE SUGGESTED THE SOVIET PROGRAM IS INFERIOR TO THE AMERICAN EFFORT, CLAIM-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ING THAT:

--CIVIL DEFENSE EDUCATION BEGINS EARLIER FOR AMERICANS THAN FOR SOVIETS (ALLEGEDLY FIRST GRADE AS OPPOSED TO SECOND GRADE IN SOVIET UNION);

--AMERICANS HAVE MORE SHELTER SPACE THAN NEEDED FOR THE POPULATION (228 MILLION CAPACITY); AND

--AMERICAN CIVIL DEFENSE ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN SUBORDINATED UNDER THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SINCE 1962.

5. COMMENT: THIS SPARE ZNANIE PRESENTATION (THE FIRST WE HAVE EVER NOTED) SEEMED ALMOST A DOWN-PLAY OF THE SOVIET CIVIL DEFENSE PROGRAM, WITH SPEAKER AVOIDING ALARMIST APPEALS AND SIDESTEPPING QUESTIONS AS TO PRECISE NATURE OF THE CIVIL DEFENSE SYSTEM. EVEN RECENT WESTERN COMMENTARY ON SOVIET PROGRAM WAS ALLUDED TO ONLY IN MUTED FORM. PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE LECTURE WAS APPARENTLY LOW--ONLY TEN PERSONS

SAT IN A HALL FOR 200--AND ONLY FOUR QUESTIONS WERE ASKED.  
HOWEVER, DEGREE TO WHICH THEIR INTEREST IN THE TOPIC HAS BEEN  
EXHAUSTED IN OTHER, CLOSED, MEETINGS IS NOT KNOWN. FOR  
EXAMPLE, BPAO, MISTAKEN FOR A SOVIET, WAS RECENTLY ASKED BY  
PERSON AT HERMITAGE WHERE THE LOCAL CIVIL DEFENSE MEETING WAS  
BEING HELD, AND WE ALSO RECENTLY NOTICED SIGN ANNOUNCING CIVIL  
DEFENSE CLASSES. IT ALSO WAS IMPOSSIBLE FROM LECTURE TO  
JUDGE EXTENT OF SOVIET PROGRAM. ONE QUESTIONER ASKED HOW  
SOVIET SHELTER CAPACITY COMPARED TO ALLEGED AMERICAN ABILITY  
TO SHELTER 100 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION AND WHETHER  
LENINGRAD WAS "AS BADLY OFF" IN THIS RESPECT AS HE HAD HEARD  
IT TO BE. THE SPEAKER CLAIMED NOT TO KNOW THE ANSWER TO  
THE LATTER PART OF THE QUESTION AND, IN ADDITION, DISCLAIMED  
ALL KNOWLEDGE OF THE ANTI-MISSILE DEFENSE. END COMMENT.  
NEUBERT

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## Message Attributes

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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009